

56a Info Shop
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LONDON.
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★ South East LONDON INFORMATION — AUGUST '91 — ★ No.1

Hello friends,
welcome to some news from South East London.

POLICE RIOT IN ELEPHANT & CASTLE

There has been a lot of problems recently with police attacks on big squatted places. On August 3rd, the Anti-Fascist Action gig by The Blaggers and Oi ! Polloi at THE HELLHOUSE (a squatted factory in Borough Road) was attacked by the cops. They turned up at about 1 AM and two or three gained entrance to the gig but these were soon forced out. About five minutes later, they came in again with dogs and wielding truncheons and violently evicted everyone from the place. At the same time, they had the Electricity Board with them to cut off the power supply and Group Four Security Guards (a private company) to seal the place up.

Outside, after clearing the place, the cops pushed a crowd of about 100 down Borough Road and made up to 30 arrests. A few cop cars were damaged and a few bottles and bricks thrown but there was nothing we could do as most of the crowd got split up by the cops very soon. Despite the bust, the gig was the best yet at THE HELLHOUSE and raised £200 for Anti-Fascist Action and the 56a Bookstall sold 40 worth of stuff !

The next day, the folk from THE HELLHOUSE, re-squatted the place and got the power back on and are planning more events there. Also they are getting a barricade ready to prevent the pigs from entering.



POLICE RIOT IN PECKHAM

On August 17th, a gig was held in the squatted MIDLAND BANK in Peckham. As it was free about 400 people turned up and had a good time. The police called around after complaints about noise and then they disappeared. About 4 AM when the crowd was down to less than 100, the riot police arrived and viciously attacked the party goers. Many people were injured by police dog bites and some were beaten up by the cops with batons. The cops sealed off Peckham High Street for 2 hours. About eight people were arrested and some have been charged with AFFRAY which is a very serious Public Order Act charge.

About 40 folks from THE MIDLAND BANK and THE HELLHOUSE and other local punks, squatters, anarchists and one Trotskyist held a meeting on the Sunday after to discuss the two police riots and start a campaign called HELL-BANK to publicise the trouble and start initiatives to defend ourselves from further police attacks. The HELL-BANK folks joined the recent the Anti-Fascist march on 24th August (see next page !) and leafleted it with an excellent leaflet detailing the police riots.

The HELLHOUSE is now having a Sunday Lunch with food and beer every week to enable people to come along and talk about what can be done.

If you want anymore details about HELL-BANK then get in touch with 56a, as yet there is no contact address for HELL-BANK Campaign.



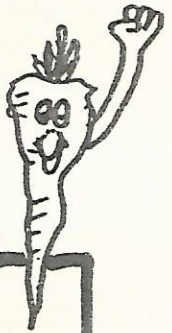
— Move Pigs —



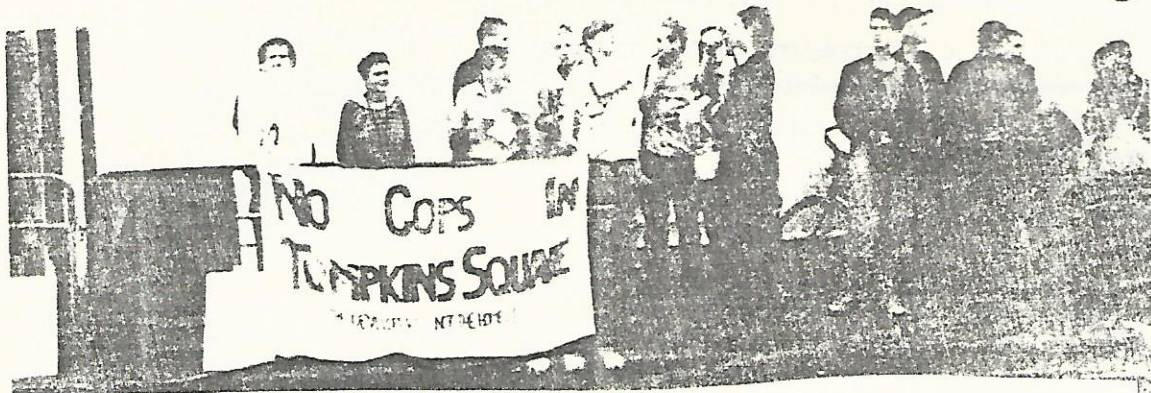
Also, in Brixton at the start of August, two community based projects were raided by police with sledgehammers who busted in walls and doors and ransacked the offices.

— FOOD for ALL —

Other strange police behaviour afflicted some comrades from 121 Anarchist Centre in Brixton who were arrested taking vegetables from a market rubbish dump, handcuffed and held in Police cells for nine hours. A "Free The Vegetable Four!!" campaign was considered but the police dropped the charges of "Theft" and the comrades heroically ran the café on the same night!



SOLIDARITY FOREVER!



56a Info-Bookshop recently responded to a request by INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK from New York to hold a solidarity demo in support of the Lower East Side homeless and squatting community which since June 3rd has been subject to police occupation following the eviction and destruction of Tompkins Square Park.

On 14th August, about 50 assorted punks, squatters and anarchists demonstrated outside the offices of the New York State Dept. Of Commerce in the West End of London. We gave out loads of leaflets to passing people and then we dispersed and re-grouped elsewhere (away from the cops!) to go on to picket Cable News Network offices. On the whole, the day was very successful, with lots of South London squatters making the effort to attend and a general good feeling about the demo.

Aug. 6, 1988 to 1991--the UPRISING Continues

→ AGONY in SOUTH LONDON ←

The last few months have been very hectic for local anti-fascists because of the arrival of the British National Party (BNP) in Camberwell. The fascists came into this racially mixed area and onto the Elmington Housing Estate to try and gain support for one of their members who was standing in a local Council election for that area.

In the run-up to the election night, Anti-Fascist Action leafleted Elmington Estate a few times and received a generally good response. On 20th July, about 100 BNP fascists arrived on the Estate and marched around it with Union Jack flags. Some people had heard that the BNP were going to turn up on this day but, in the end, only 15 people arrived to counter the fascists.

On 22nd July, Anti-Fascist Action held a public meeting in a pub near to Elmington Est. but this was a disaster with the few local people who turned up being angered by the nonsensical and endless rhetoric of the many Left and Communist groups who always takeover any meeting. Nothing was discussed about how we actually combat the BNP presence in our area. This meeting was two days before the Election and so it left many anti-fascists feeling very demoralised.

On Election night, 25th July, a 300 strong anti-fascist turnout was present at the by-election. Most of the Left groups participated in a pointless march from one place to another which split the anti-fascist turnout and could have been very dangerous if the BNP had attacked the march. Other anti-fascist groups who were determined not to be barricaded in by the cops and who were prepared to fight any BNP people who turned up, wandered around looking for BNP scum. In the end, no BNP turned up except for five who attended the Election count and these were escorted away by the police.

At the same time as this, the BNP were active in Bermondsey area of South London which had a very large white, working class population and has always been a very racist area. The BNP managed to gather every Saturday and sell their papers at The Blue which is a market in the area.

The Southwark Black Communities Consortium, a coalition of various Labour, Leftist and community groups had decided to hold a march from Peckham to Bermondsey to highlight increasing fascist violence.

The march on 24th August assembled in Peckham with about 600 people and marched a long way round to Bermondsey via Camberwell and Old Kent Road. When the march arrived on the northside of Old Kent Road (where Rotherhithe / Bermondsay starts) it was obvious that A) the march was getting smaller and B) there were lots of fascists about. At The Tropics pub, the cops had to barricade the door to prevent the fascists attacking the march.

Further down the road at Silwood Estate, about 150 fascists and local racists had been penned in by the police. Many council tenants had joined the fascist side and some waved Union Jack flags from their flats.

One fascist ran at the demo and was arrested and then his Union Jack was burnt by some Maoists. Naturally this incensed the BNP who again tried to attack the march. As the march reached Southwark Park a rally was to be held, about 50 fascists ran at us from inside the park. It became clear that the fascists were everywhere. As we got into the park, we were about only 150 by then. Opposite us, on the grass, about 300 fascists lined up and a few cops held them back. Our demo decided to abandon the rally and march back to Peckham. The saddest part of the story is that without the police at our side, we would definitely have been seriously attacked by the BNP.

On the way back, the BNP crowd attacked the police who wouldn't let them near our march. The riot police forced them back down to The Blue in Bermondsey where some fascists attacked a passing black motorist and they also broke the windows of an Off-License and a Wimpy bar.

BNP members try to look intelligent ↙



WHAT NEXT ???

On Sunday (the next day) a discussion about the demo happened at the HELL-BANK meeting and on Monday that days events were talked about at the meeting of the newly-formed SOUTHWARK COMMUNITY ACTION. Overall, the talk focused on why the demo was such a mistake. There was no groundwork before the demo explaining to Bermondsey residents about the dangers of fascism and the need for working-class solidarity. The BNP were active all week before the march in Bermondsey saying that a Black march was coming to attack whites in the area. Many people would not have understood why the black community were marching and joined the BNP side simply because they were white and from the local area.

There is talk of another march to that area to show how strong the black community is. We fear that such an action will do nothing to promote black and white unity against State attacks but just further polarise the opinions of the racist tenants in the Bermondsey area.

SOUTHWARK COMMUNITY ACTION has been established as a group to promote resistance to cops, BNP, Poll Tax Bailiffs attacks and we hope to work with local communities against racist and fascist ideas.

TSDC UPDATE

July 17 and 18 saw two notable victories at Southwark Crown Court for Trafalgar Square defendants.

On July 17, Neil Fernandez was cleared of two counts of arson against a Porsche and a Jag. The judge threw the case out of court, and has referred the chief prosecution witness to the DPP for possible perjury charges. On July 18, Mike Conway was acquitted by a jury of Section 2 Public Order Act. He admitted throwing missiles at the police, but said he did it in self-defence. The jury agreed with him.

The TSDC is looking at the possibility of holding a national anti-Poll Tax march on October 19 from Brockwell Park past Brixton prison to Trafalgar Square.

TSDC new address: c/o Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Road, SW9. 071-738 7586.

PRISON PICKETS

July 6

About 60 people demonstrated outside Pentonville prison in support of Michael Neal, inside for his part in defending the Trafalgar Square demo. The demo was joined by Mark Winter, just out from his stint for non-payment, and Michael Neal was seen at his window waving his own banner in support.

It was a sunny day and a lively, noisy demo with some imaginative on-the-spot slogan improvising.

July 14

The police broke up the 40 strong Bastille day demo, in support of the six Trafalgar Square prisoners held at Wandsworth prison, after one and a half hours.

This was after their megaphoned announcements that this was an 'unauthorised gathering' and that we should disperse immediately were drowned out by our megaphones and singing.

After the police moved in, we regrouped on Wandsworth Common. An attempt to march around the prison was stopped half way by the police. Congratulations to the supporter from Hungary who gave a rendition of an Hungarian anti-prison song.

We must continue to show support for everyone victimised for their involvement in the movement. Prison pickets will be held on the first Saturday of each month till all the prisoners have been freed.

Poll tax revolt swells in anger over surcharge

by Andrew Gifford and Maurice Chittenden

POLL TAX arrears are mounting as Britain's local authorities face a rebellion among people who paid their bills on time last year. Councils report that many people are withholding this year's payments in protest at having to pay a supplementary charge to make up for the shortfall caused by non-payment by others last year.

A survey by The Sunday Times shows that three out of four councils are suffering collection problems because residents object to the charges of up to £65 per head shown on this year's bills to compensate for non-payment last year. Town halls have been inundated with protest letters and telephone calls.

More than three months into the 1991-92 financial year, some councils have received less than 10% of their poll tax income for the current year (see table). Continuing problems in poll tax collection will be confirmed in official returns from councils to be published later this month. They will show that fewer people have paid something towards their bills than at this time last year, when 77% had started to pay.

August 11th 91

*** COMING SOON - ***
LONDON ... OCT. 19th
NATIONAL ANTI-POLL TAX MARCH
from PENTONVILLE PRISON to TRAFALGAR SQ.
(yeah!)

That's all folks...
★ 4 -